

Christ in the Clouds

Coming to Judgment.

O R, T H E

Diffolution of all Things.

Wherein is set forth

The Second Coming of CHRIST to Judgment

As also

The Arraignment, Trial, Condemnation, and most
Dreadful Sentence passed on

All Impenitent S I N N E R S.

With the Happy and Glorious Condition of
Those who have Repented, and

Preferred CHRIST above All.

Being the Substance of a S E R M O N preached by
the Rev. Dr. BATES, lately deceased. *K*

The Dead shall hear his Voice, and they shall come forth, &c.
John v. 28. 29.

Printed for Joseph Brock, and sold by S. Rudder
at Cirencester.

- Courteous Reader,

*If these weighty Considerations are not worth One
Penny, keep it clean and return it back.*

CHRIST in the CLOUDS, Coming to Judgment.

Matt. xvi, 27.

*Then shall be Reward every Man according to his
Works.*



THE Text gives us an Account of the Day of Doom, which is the last Day of the grand Assize, wherein every Man shall be try'd at the grand Bar of God's Tribunal. And every Man shall then and there receive according to his Works, whether they be Good or whether they be Evil.

I shall not trouble myself, or you with the very Signs of this Day, because I have not Time, but will proceed :

It is most certain that the day of Judgment will come; and that it will be very dreadful to all the wicked; and seeing these Things must be, what manner of Persons ought we to be in all manner of Conversation; always looking for the coming of Christ: At whose coming the Sun shall be darken'd, and the Moon shall not give her Light, the Stars shall be shaken, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat: Who can hear of all this and not be wonderfully dismayed? Oh! who dare Eat, or Drink, or Sleep, or take a minute's Rest? Be sure these shall come. Oh! wake, ye drunkards, and

weep all ye drinkers of Wine, because of the new Wine, for it shall be pulled from your Mouths: Gird your-selves, lament ye Priests, howl ye Ministers of the Altar, alas! for the Day of the Lord is at hand.

The Doctrine shall be this:

That it is a Gospel truth, that Christ, who came into the World in Form of a Servant, will, one Day, come as a Judge, attended with his Angels, And if this be so, then first for the Use of exhortation:

I st Use. Let all be warned, and while we have Time, let us provide for that Day. Yet while the Weather is fair, we may frame an Ark to save us from the Flood. Yet are Angels at the Gates of Sodom, and yet Jonas in the streets of Nineveh, yet the Prophet woos, Oh! Judah, how should I intreat thee? Yea, the Apostle prays, nay we pray you in Christ's stead, that you be reconciled unto God. But here a Question will arise, How will Christ appear?

I answer, That he will appear only as a Man to Judge us, who as a Man appeared to be judged: Consider this, ye that are going to the Bar, what a dreadful Sight will this be to the faithless Jews, stubborn Gentiles, and wicked Christians; when every Eye shall see him, and they also that perceive him? This is the Man (shall they say) that was crucify'd for us, and again crucify'd by us. Why, alas! every Sin is a Cross, every Oath is a Spear, And when that Day is come, you must

behold him whom you thus crucify by your daily Sins. Surely this will be a very dreadful Sight. Where is the desperate Swearer, that can tear his Wounds, Heart, and Blood? At this Day all these Words shall appear, the Heart be visible, the Body and Blood be sensible of good and Bad: Then shall that fearful Voice proceed from the Throne, Where is the Blood which thou spillest? Here is that woeful Judgment; when thou that art the Murderer, shalt see the slain Man be thy Judge: What Favour canst thou expect at his Hands, whom thou hast so vilely used, by thy daily Sins? Before the Son of Man will come as it is written of him: *But woe unto that Man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It were better for him, that he had not been born.* Matt. xxvi. 24.

Quest. 2. As Christ shall appear in the Form of a Man, so this Man shall appear in a Glorious Form, O Sinners look about you, the Judge is coming; a Fire devours before him, and behind him, a Flame burns upon every Side, the People tremble, and all Faces gather Blackness. Here is a Change indeed, he that was at the Bar, now sits on a Throne; then Christ stood as a Lamb before Pilate, now Pilate stands as a Malefactor before Christ. He that was made the Foot-stool, of his Enemies, must now Judge, 'till he hath made his Enemies his Foot-stool. Where shall they run? and how shall they seek the Gifts of the Rocks and hollow Places? The Glory of his Majesty kindles a Flame, while the Heavens and Earth shall fly from the presence of their Judge.

But it may be, I prevent your Expectations, for if there be the Judge, where is the Guard? Behold

him coming from above with great Power and Glory. Would you know his Habit, he is cloathed with Majesty; would you view his Attendants, they are an Host of Angels: Nay, a longer Train than Souls of Saints descended from their imperial Seats, and attending the Lamb with great Glory. Never was any Judge Lord of such a Circuit. His Footstool is the Clouds, his Seat the Rain-bow, his Justices are Saints, his Officers are Angels and Arch-Angels. The Trumpet proclaims a silence, while a just Sentence comes from his Mouth upon all the World. *Thus you see the Assize begun, Dan. vii. 9. The Throne (as David saw in his Vision) were set up, and the ancient of Days sat down. His Garments white as Snow, and the Hair of his Head like pure Wool. His Throne like the fiery Flame, and his Wheels as burning Fire.*

This is the Judge, whose coming is so fearful, ushered by a fiery Cloud, apparelled in snowy White, carried in his Circuit on burning Wheels, and attended with Thousands and ten Thousands. O ye Jews! behold the Man whom before ye crucified as a Malefactor; behold him in his Throne! Him whom ye said his Disciples had stolen away by Night out of his Grave. *Behold him in his Majesty, Matt. xxix, 13.* He whom you would not look upon in his humility; this is he, at whose appearing the kindreds of the Earth shall mourn; Such a shout of fury follows the sight of his Majesty, that the Vaults shall echo, the Hills resound; the Earth shall quake, the Heavens pass away, and be turned to confusion. Then shall the wicked mourn, then

shall they weep, and wail, yet their Tears will not serve their purpose, their Sins past betray them. Thus shall the wicked bewail their miserable Hap, and unfortunate Birth, and cursed End. O fearful Judge! terrible as an Army with Banners, the Kings of the Earth shall be astonished. Every Eye shall see this Judge, and tremble at his Sight. Do but conceive the guilty Prisoner come to his Trial: Will not the red Robes of this Judge make his Heart bleed for his Blood-shed? Thus have I shewn you how Christ will appear in a glorious Manner.

Use 1, Think now, O sinner, what shall be thy Reward, when thou shalt meet this Judge. The Adulterer for a while may flatter Beauty: Swearers grace their Words with Oaths. Drunkards kiss their Cups, and Drink their Bodies Health 'till they bring their Souls to ruin; but remember for all these Things God will bring thee to judgment. Sad comfort in the End, when the Adulterer must satisfy his Lust when he lies upon a Bed of Fire. The swearer may have enough of Wounds and Blood, when the Devils torture his Body. The drunkard have plenty of Cups when scalding Lead is poured down his Throat. As thy Sins is, so will be the Nature of thy Punishment. The just Judge will give just Measure of his great Wrath.

Use 2. For comfort to all that are the Judge's favourites. Now is the Day (if you are God's Servants) that Satan shall be trodden under your Feet: And you with your Maker Christ, shall be carried into the Holy of Holies. You may remember that each Man from God, in their utmost an-

guishes here, have fetched comfort from the Eyes of Faith. At this Mountain Job rejoiced, being cast on a Dunghil, that his Redeemer lived, and that he should see him at the last Day, standing on the Earth. And the Apostle John longed and cried out, *Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.* 1. John ii. 28. Now therefore little Children abide in him, that when he shall appear we may have confidence: For he shall reward every Man according to his Works. But now I must proceed:

(Every Man.) The Persons who are to be judged are a World of Men, good and bad, elect and reprobate:

First. There is a Summons, and this each Man must hear, and this must be the Voice of the last Trumpet, Arise, ye Dead, and come to Judgment. Oh! how terrible a Voice will this be to all the wicked! how will they tremble at this Voice, that makes the Earth to tremble! at this Voice the Graves of the Dead shall be open'd, and re-unite them to their Bodies. The dark pit of Hell shall be taken, when the dreadful Soul shall leave its Place of terror, and once more enter into her stinking Carrion, to receive a great Condemnation. John v. 28. 29. *The Voice of Christ is powerful, the Dead shall hear his Voice, and they shall come forth. They that have done good to the Resurrection of Life, and they that have done Evil unto the resurrection of Condemnation.*

Thus much for the Summons that you hear is given, and every Man must appear. Death must now give back all that he hath taken from the

World. What a ghastly sight shall that be, to see the Graves open, to see the dead Men rise out of their Graves, and the Dust fly on the Wings of the Wind, till it meet together in one Body.——

Ezek. xxxvii, 6. *The dry Bones shall live.* Behold the Power of God Almighty! Out of this Grave and the Dust of the Earth, from these Chambers of Death and darkness shall arise the Bodies of the buried. Rev. xxv. 22. 23. *I saw the Dead (saith St. John) small and great, stand before God, and the Sea gave up her Dead, which were in it, and Death and Hell deliver'd up the Dead which were in them, and they were judged every Man according to his Works. He that said to Corruption, Thou art my Father; and to the Worm, Thou art my Sister and Mother, said also, I know that my Redemer liveth, and mine Eyes shall behold him. O good God, how great is thy Power!* Joel iii. 11. 12. *Assemble yourselves and come all ye Heathens to the Valley of Jehosaphat; for there I will sit to Judge the Heathen.*

Thus have you an Account of the Dead being raised; they are all brought together, and now we must Part them asunder; the Sheep shall be put on the right-hand, and the Goats on the left. And now you see the Parties thus summoned, raised, gathered, and set a-part. Is not here a World of Men to be Judged in one Day? All Tongues, all Nations, all People of the Earth must appear in one Day. We shall then see each Son of Adam, and Adam shall then see each of his posterity. Consider this, high and low, rich and poor, one with another. God is no excepter of Persons.

Hark! O Beggar! though Petitions are out of Date, yet thou need'st not fear; for thou shalt have Justice done thee. On this Day all Cases must be heard, and thou, though never so poor, despised in the World, thou must with the rest receive thy Sentence. Hark! O Farmer! now are thy Lives and Leases together finished. This Day is the new Harvest of this Judge, who gathers his Wheat, but burns up his Chaff in fire unquenchable. No Bribes, Prayers, nor Tears can avail thy Soul. But as thou hast done, so art thou sentenced. Hark! O Landlord! where is the Purchase to thee and thy Heirs for ever. This Day makes an End of all, and happy were thy Soul, if thou hadst no better Land than a barren Rock to cover and shelter thee from the Presence of the Judge. Hark! O Captain! vain now is the hope of Man to be saved by the Multitude of an Host. Thou hast commanded of the Armies of Earth and Hell, yet can'st thou not resist the Power of Heaven! Hark! the Trumpet sounds, and the Alarm summons thee. Thou must appear. All must appear. The Beggar, the Farmer, and Landlord, the Captain, the Princes, and the great Potentates of the Earth. Each of them must receive his reward.

And now having brought the Prisoners to the Trial, I must tell you how this Trial must be for your Works. Faith is justified, but by Works we are judged: But mistake me not, They shall be judged according to their Works, as being the best Witness of their inward righteousness: But the better to acquaint you with this trial we are to consider.

First. How each Man's Work must be manifested to him.

Secondly how each Man's Work must be examined by God.

First. Of the manifestation of every Man's Works. Rev. ii. 12. *John saith, He saw the Dead small and great, stand before God, and the Book was opened, and another Book was opened, which is the Book of Life, and the Dead were judged out of those Things which were written in the Book, according to their Works.* Remember this O forgetful Sinner! thou may'st commit Sin after Sin, and Multiply your Sins, but be assured, God keeps a just Account, and not one of thy Sins, though never so secret, shall be forgot. There is a Book of God's Memory. 'Tis called a Book of Remembrance, Mal. iii. 16. *A Book of Remembrance was written before God, for them that fear the Lord, and think upon his Name.* This is that which manifests all Secrets, this is that which reveals all Doings, whether good or evil. In these Receipts are found at large, Abel's Sacrifices, Cain's Murder, Absalom's Rebellion, David's Devotion, the Jews Cruelty, the Prophets Innocency. Nothing can be hid, when it is opened, for all may run and read it. God will bring every work unto Judgment, and every secret Thing, be it good or evil. Eccles. xii, 24. *Wail ye wicked, and tremble in astonishment.* Now your Closet Sins must be disclosed, your private Faults laid open. Imprimis, adultery, envy, blasphemy, swearing, drunkenness, violence, Murder, lying, sabbath-breaking, and every Sin from

the beginning to the End, the total Sum eternal Death and Damnation.

But there is another Book that shall give a more fearful Account than the former, which is the Book of each Man's conscience, and the secretary of the Soul of Man. No Man can commit one Sin, but his Soul that is privy to the Fact, will write it in this Book. In what a woeful Case will thy Heart be then? In what a strange terror and trembling must it then be, when this must be open'd, and thy Sins revealed? their Book is now perhaps shut up and sealed, but in the Day of Judgment it shall be open'd, and what will the Evidence do as will be brought in; there is a private Sessions to be held in the Breast of every Sinner. The Memory is the Record, the truth is the Law, Damnation the Judgment, Hell the Prison, the Devils the Jailors, and Conscience both Witness and Judge, to pass sentence on thee. What Hopes can he have at the general Assize, whose Conscience condemns him before he appears. Consider this, O thou impenitent Sinner!

But yet there is another Book we read of, and that is the Book of Life. Herein are written the Names of God's Elect, from the beginning of the World, to the End thereof. This is the precious Book of Heaven, wherein if we be registered, not all the Powers of darkness, or Death, or Devils, can blot us out again.—But a little to recall ourselves:

The Prisoners are tried, the Verdict is brought in, the Indictments are found, and the Judge now

sits upon Life and Death, even ready with sparkling Eyes to pronounce his Sentence, may be for us, and we be saved, to our endless Comfort. O now hold up your Heads! all the Saints of the Most High God, for this will be a blessed Day to you, for you shall hear the sweet Voice of Christ, saying, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you.* I cannot express the Joy this will be unto the Righteous, when they shall hear Christ say, Come ye blessed Souls, who have bathed in repenting Tears. Here is a Sentence able to revive the Dead; much more the afflicted; are ye not sorrowing for your Sins? leave it awhile, and meditate with me on this ensuing melody. Hear, yonder is a choir of Angels, sounding unto the Judge, whilst he is pronouncing of the Sentence. Now is the Day of our Coronation, now you'll be made perfectly happy for ever. Come, saith Christ, you that have suffered for me, now you shall have your Reward; you shall have your Souls filled up unto the brim with Joy, such as is unspeakable and full of Glory.

But I must return to the left Hand, and shew you another Crew, prepared for another Sentence. And Oh! what a terrible Sentence will that be, which will make all ears glow and tingle? *His Lips (saith the Prophet) are full of indignation, and his Tongue like a consuming Fire.* Isa. xx. 27. What Fire is so hot as that fiery Furnace? Depart ye cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

First. They must depart. This seems nothing to the wicked now; now they are contented to be gone; they have much more delight in Sin, than in God's Service. But whither must they go; From me; and if from me, then from all, that is, my Mercies, my Glory, and my Salvation: But whither, O Lord! shall the cursed go, that depart from thee? Into what Haven shall they arrive? What Master shall they serve? It is thought a great Punishment to be banished from our native Soil, what then is it to be banished from Almighty God? but, Whither must they go? Into everlasting Fire. O, what a Bed is this? No Feathers but Fire, no Friends but Furies, no Ease but Fetters, no Light but Smoak, no Clocks to pass the Time, but endless Eternity, Fire intolerable, a Fire burning and never dying! It shall not be quenched Night nor Day, the Smoak thereof shall go up for evermore, and all the wicked shall be crowded together like Bricks in a fiery Furnace. For whom was this prepared? For the Devil and his Angels; these must be your Companions; the last Sentence is now pronouncing: What go? who? ye cursed into everlasting Fire. O take heed that you live in God's fear, lest that leaving his Service, he give you this Reward, Depart ye cursed.

Use. Consider what fearful trembling will seize on their Souls that have their Sentence for eternal Flames. O, which way will they turn, or how will they escape the Almighty's Wrath? to go either forwards or backwards is impossible. Whose Help will they crave? God is their Judge, Heaven

is their Foe, the Saints deride them, the Angels hate them. Good Lord! what a world of Miseries have seized upon these miserable Souls? The Executioners are Devils, the dungeon is Hell, the Earth stands open, and the cruel fiery Furnace ready boiling to receive them into his Mouth.

Oh! how will these poor Souls both squal and tremble? Every Part of their Bodies will bear a Part in this doleful Ditty: Eyes weep, Hands be wrung, Breasts beat, Hearts ach, and Voices cry. Now, O Man of the Earth, what will thy wealth avail thee? *One Drop of water to cool thy Tongue in the Flames, is worth more than all the Pleasures of the World.* Luke xvi. 24.

Thus have you heard the Sentence of the just, and also of the wicked; and now is the Judge arriving from his glorious Throne, all the Saints are guarding him along, and the sentenced Prisoners are delivered to the Jailors. Secrets of horror will be heard: what woes and Lamentations will be uttered, when Devils and reprobates, and all the damned crew of Hell, shall be driven into Hell; never to return again? down they go, howling and shrinking, and gnashing their Teeth: The World leaves them, the Earth forsakes them, Hell entertains them; there they must both live and die, and yet neither live nor die; but dying live, and living die. Oh! how miserable are those! if but the meer drowning of the old World, and the swallowing up Korah, and burning up Sodom with Brimstone, were attended with such Terrors, and hideous out-cries, how infinitely, to all possibility of

conceit, or expression, or belief, will be the confusion and trembling of that red fiery Day? In a Word what wailing, yelling, filing of Heaven, Earth and Hell! Oh! miserable creatures. Matt. xxii, 13. *Take them away, and cast them into utter Darkness; where shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* A Darkness indeed! they must be for ever debarred from the Sight of Heaven. No Sun-shine ever penetrates within these Walls; nothing is surely contained there but thick Smoak and Darkness. And such is the sure and certain Portion of Sinners, and the manifest Reward of the wicked. To wind up all in one Word of Comfort to the blessed Saints of God. Look upwards, and you may manifestly see your happy Company.

The CONCLUSION.

AFTER the wicked are thus cast down into Hell, Christ and all the blessed Saints ascend up into the Heavens, from the Tribunal Seat of the Judgment. Christ shall arise, with the glorious Angels of Heaven, and Marching towards the Heaven of Heavens, Singing with Songs of triumph, Isa. lviii. 8. *The Voice of the Watchmen shall be heard. They shall lift up their Voices, and shout together, for they shall see, Eye to Eye, when the Lord will bring again Zion.* Here is a fine Victory indeed; the Soldiers all in arrayed Order, both Marching and triumphing. Christ leads the way; the Cherubims attend, the Seraphims burn in Love. Angels, Arch-angels, principalities, Powers, pa-

triarches, Prophets, Priests, Evangelists, and Martyrs, all of them attending the Judge and King of Glory; Singing with such Melody, as never any Ear hath heard; shining with such Majesty, as never any Eye hath seen; and Rejoicing without Measure, with such Joy, as never Heart hath conceived. O blessed Train! each One doth bear a Palm of Victory in his Hand; each One must wear a Crown of Glory on his Head. The church Militant is now triumphant. With a final overthrow, they have conquered Devils, and now must they enjoy God, and Life, and Heaven; And thus, as they March along, Heaven opens unto them. O infinite Joys! Tell me, O Soul! what a happy and glorious Hour will this be, when blessed Trinity shall gladly entertain thee; and, with a Well done good and faithful Servant, enter into thy Masters Joy. Now, all these Angels and Saints shall rejoice at thy Arrival at the Port of Heaven. Here is the End of the Godly: the Fruits of which End is the Reward itself: What can I say, but live in God's Fear, and the Lord Reward you; nay, and he will so, if you live so. For then he shall Reward every Man according to his Works.

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